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President: Mr. Mérorès ..... (Haiti)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.15 p.m.

Opening of the meeting

Video message from Mr. Bingu wa Mutharika, President of Malawi

1. **Mr. Mutharika** (President of Malawi) said that one of the major causes of the global food crisis was lack of a global policy framework recognizing food and agriculture as a top priority. Another issue had been the international community's lack of understanding of the national dynamics of agriculture and food production, national policy orientation and interventions, and the fears of local populations. Large-scale farming was not effective in countries with little land and a majority of peasant farmers. In such countries, it was more important to increase farmers' productivity so as to create a surplus for marketing. Global monitoring of food production, marketing and distribution was also of crucial importance.

2. Malawi had invested heavily in agriculture and irrigation, providing farmers with subsidized inputs as well as with training on application of the inputs and farming methods. As a result, Malawi had enjoyed a considerable surplus over the period 2006-2007 and was expecting another surplus for the current period. It had also been able to export and, in some cases, donate food to neighbouring countries.

3. Political commitment and consensus were essential in order to bring about a change in policy. Rather than trying to impose a one-size-fits-all formulas on countries, international institutions should engage in a dialogue with country policymakers at the local level in order to assess their needs. It was also important for the international community to encourage developing countries to produce larger quantities of food themselves, perhaps by supplementing food aid with investment in agricultural production.

4. He appealed to the international community and individual Governments to give higher priority to agriculture and food security and to engage in a dialogue to explore new alternatives for ensuring food security, in which global interests would have to be considered alongside narrower national interests.

Video message from Mr. Gordon Brown, Prime Minister, United Kingdom

5. **Mr. Brown** (Prime Minister of the United Kingdom) welcomed the decision of the Organization and the World Bank to work together under the leadership of the Secretary-General to devise a comprehensive and coordinated international response to the global food crisis. The immediate challenge was to provide for those worst affected by the crisis by responding generously to the World Food Programme's (WFP) appeals for additional funds. In the longer term, it was essential to support social protection programmes to ensure that poor people's basic needs were met and to focus increasingly on rural areas, where agricultural development was a priority. The Governments of countries receiving support from donors needed to make greater efforts in implementing sound policies.

6. Investment and agricultural research were essential components of a sustainable solution. In addition, rich countries must stop undermining the livelihoods of the poorest through agricultural subsidies and dumping; further reform of the Common Agricultural Policy and United States Farm Bill was needed in that regard.

7. Challenges at the global level included ensuring a fair global trading system. Food should be a central focus of the upcoming Group of Eight Summit and the high-level event on the Millennium Development Goals, to be held in September 2008. The United Kingdom was committed to doing its part, and had already contributed to food, social protection and monitoring initiatives, as well as international research on agriculture targeted at small-scale farmers. He expressed the hope that the Doha trade negotiations would soon come to a successful close.

Introductory statement by the President of the Economic and Social Council

8. **The President** said that the current global food crisis threatened to undermine the modest progress achieved in recent years to alleviate world poverty and hunger, as well as the political and economic stability of Governments in the most vulnerable areas. Humanitarian needs must be addressed immediately, but it was also crucial to ensure sufficient food supplies in the future through increased agricultural production. Accordingly, agriculture must again

become a key point on the development agenda. He welcomed the establishment by the Secretary-General of the United Nations Task Force on the Global Food Security Crisis. The Council stood ready to contribute to the resolution of the crisis, including by convening round-table and panel discussions on various aspects of food security during the high-level and coordination segments of its substantive session in July. In addition, the Council's humanitarian segment would feature a panel discussion on humanitarian issues related to global food aid.

9. The Council needed to consider how best to address the issue of food security as part of its long-term agenda and needed to muster the resources and political will to successfully end the current crisis in a lasting manner.

Statement by the President of the sixty-second session of the General Assembly

10. **Mr. Kerim** (President of the General Assembly) said that the global food crisis required a coordinated response by the international community and he commended the Secretary-General for establishing the Task Force. Alleviating the impact of the food crisis should be the first step in a series of broader measures to be taken by the international community to tackle the crisis. Donors must act now to support WFP's call for US$ 750 million to meet emergency needs and investment in agriculture must become a priority. Moreover, States should work to create a more level playing field so that farmers in developing countries could benefit from higher prices. All such elements should be taken into consideration in the Task Force's plan, to be presented at the upcoming High-level Conference on World Food Security in Rome.

11. Rising oil prices had contributed significantly to the rise in food prices. A sustainable solution to the crisis must therefore be linked to oil price stability and efforts to tackle climate change.

12. The General Assembly must play a lead role in launching initiatives and achieving results. He had invited the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, to brief the General Assembly on the status of the comprehensive action plan in preparation for the upcoming Conference in Rome. He supported the idea of convening a special session of the General Assembly to discuss further steps contributing to a unified strategy as well as to immediate actions.

Address by the Deputy Secretary-General of the United Nations

13. **Ms. Migiro** (Deputy Secretary-General) said that the current situation demanded urgent, coordinated international action to prevent similar crises in the future. It was crucial to devise new and effective development strategies, including technical and financial assistance to farmers. The newly established Task Force would soon develop a comprehensive strategy for immediate and long-term action in four priority areas, namely, meeting emergency needs, strengthening local populations, helping small-scale farmers boost production, and reinforcing local and national Governments in their own responses to the crisis.

14. In the long term, the international community needed to increase research and development support for agricultural development, particularly in Africa. It was of utmost importance to move the Doha Development Round towards a successful conclusion, with a view to stimulating agricultural development. That presupposed, in part, a breakthrough on agricultural subsidies and tariffs in developed countries. Finally, in contemplating potential solutions to the food crisis, it was crucial to examine the multitude of causes carefully, including the growing use of biofuels.

Statement by the President of the Security Council

15. **Mr. Sawers** (President of the Security Council) said that while food security might exacerbate issues already on the Security Council agenda or raise new issues, the primary responsibility for addressing food security itself lay outside the Security Council. The Security Council supported the efforts of the Economic and Social Council, and the United Nations system more generally, and therefore warmly welcomed the Council's debate.

Keynote address by Mr. Joachim von Braun, Director-General of the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI)

16. **Mr. von Braun** (International Food Policy Research Institute) said that the food price crisis had hit a world that had a more unequal distribution of income than ever before, a world that had left the poorest behind.

17. The complex causes of the food and agriculture crisis required a comprehensive response, and he suggested two sets of policy actions: an emergency package of actions to be taken immediately and a resilience package of actions to be phased in immediately but whose impact might take time.

18. The four actions of the emergency package would be to: expand emergency humanitarian assistance; eliminate agricultural export bans; undertake fast-impact food production programmes in key areas; and change biofuel policies.

19. In order to expand emergency response and humanitarian assistance, world preparedness to take action on food prices must be improved and resources made available to agencies such as the World Food Programme (WFP) must be price-adjusted. Food transfers should be targeted to the poorest people, with a focus on early childhood nutrition, regions in distress and school feeding. Those measures could be expected to protect the food consumption levels of people served by existing programmes, and increased funding would prevent further deterioration of food and nutrition security and increase emergency preparedness.

20. Agricultural export bans among developing countries had created a new trade policy theatre. Governments had a legitimate interest in caring for their citizens first; hence, the problem of export bans should not be addressed country by country but by an ad hoc forum of global players negotiating according to a code of conduct and in a spirit of mutual trust. At the very least, export trade for humanitarian purposes should be reopened immediately. Those measures could be expected to stabilize grain price fluctuations and reduce price levels by 30 per cent.

21. Fast-impact food production programmes required access to seeds, fertilizers and credit for the small farm sector — in other words, the traditional "Green Revolution" package. Carefully subsidized programmes for seed and water should involve the private sector from the beginning and facilitate a transition to market-based arrangements. Such fast-impact production programmes would jumpstart agricultural growth in the short term, create opportunities to earn income during the crisis, and lead to lower prices.

22. Changing biofuel policies would make more grains and oilseeds available for food and feed. Measures would include freezing biofuel production at current levels, reducing production or imposing a moratorium on biofuels based on grains and oilseeds until prices came down to reasonable levels according to supply and demand. A grain-based biofuels moratorium might bring maize prices down by about 20 per cent and, as a consequence, decrease wheat prices by about 10 per cent.

23. The four actions of the resilience package would be to: calm markets; invest in social protection; scale up investments for sustained agricultural growth; and complete the WTO Doha Round. As regards markets, since speculation was mainly a consequence, not a cause, of the price crisis, over-regulation would be an inappropriate response. Surveillance and regulatory measures should be taken to curb excessive speculation in agricultural commodity markets. A coordinated set of pledges for a modest grain reserve to be made by the main grain-producing countries should be established at global and regional levels. A global intelligence network should inform the management of those international coordinated reserves. From that initiative, the pooling of global or regional public stocks, complemented by an International Monetary Fund import-financing facility, would allow countries with greater food deficits in a particular region to gain access to food supplies at reasonable and stable prices in times of crisis. It would also help to contain the speculative expectations that fuelled further price rises.

24. Investment in social protection included conditional cash transfer programmes, pension systems, employment programmes and school feeding. Existing programmes in low-income countries should be scaled up and preventive health and nutrition programmes targeted to vulnerable populations should be strengthened and scaled up. Those steps could prevent the long-term adverse consequences of early childhood malnutrition, protect the assets of the poor and maintain school participation rates.

25. In order to transform the crisis into an opportunity for small farmers and to build resilience to withstand future food crises, a transition to viable long-term investments in support of sustained agricultural growth was urgently needed. Those investments would have high returns not only in terms of agricultural growth, but also in terms of poverty reduction in both rural and urban areas through increased production and employment and lower food prices. Completion of the WTO Doha Round would lead to more fair and open

trade, more efficient resource use and improved welfare of people in developing countries.

26. In conclusion, implementation of the proposed actions required global and regional cooperation and priority-setting. The ultimate responsibility for responding to high prices rested at national level; however, the current organizational structure at the international level for agriculture, food and nutrition had failed to prevent the crisis. A new international architecture for governance of that area was needed in order to implement those initiatives in the long run. Immediate global and national action was needed through existing mechanisms, well-coordinated special initiatives and possibly a special fund, whose resources would be distributed not in parallel, but through existing mechanisms at the international and country levels. When the current crisis ended, policy must not return to business as usual, or the next crisis would hit even harder.

Remarks by distinguished guests

27. **Mr. Sachs** (Columbia University) said that the current food crisis could not be dealt with simply by providing food aid; food production must be increased, especially in the poorest countries like Haiti and sub-Saharan Africa, where dramatic increases in local food production were possible. Small-hold farmers, with under 2 hectares of land, could not finance the inputs like fertilizer, improved seeds and irrigation necessary to increase yields, and thus it was necessary to focus on financing those critical inputs in order to raise productivity. It would be a mistake to believe that markets alone could do that; special financing facilities in the form of grants or revolving funds would be needed, but the result would be raised yields. He appealed to donors to help to finance such inputs. The international financial system would also need to make available new financing mechanisms.

28. With regard to biofuels, he said that whereas Brazil's production of ethanol from sugar cane made sense from an energy and carbon-balance point of view, ethanol production from corn in the United States of America made no sense at all. Not only was the process very costly, but it was highly subsidized, and had no positive energy or carbon balance. Currently about one third of the maize grown in the United States was going into the gas tank. Urgent steps were needed because the United States was the world's largest producer of maize.

29. In the face of the acute and chronic nutrition crisis, school feeding programmes, including iron and vitamin supplements, were a low-cost intervention with a big impact. Such interventions were part and parcel of achieving the Millennium Development Goals on hunger and poverty, and the crisis could serve to open the eyes of the world to chronic conditions of nutritional deficit. Research and development funding for tropical agriculture should be doubled, rather than cut, because new crop varieties would be needed to increase production. The Goals could still be achieved provided that the rich countries kept their promises and delivered the necessary financial aid. The international community must hold together and follow through on its commitments.

30. **Mr. Glasser** (CARE International) said that not only was the global population increasing, requiring a substantial increase in food production, but climate change was complicating the world's ability to produce such additional food. The poor were eating one meal a day instead of two and were buying cheaper and less nutritious food while their children were leaving school to go to work. High food prices, poor rainfall and food procurement problems could soon trigger major crises. The international community must respond rapidly to those worrying developments, while also addressing the immediate and longer-standing causes of poverty.

31. In the short term, food aid and other relief programmes had to be adequately funded and implemented efficiently. Purchasing food aid locally reduced costs, stimulated the economy and kept farmers in business. In the medium term, expanded social protection programmes were needed. Social safety nets should focus on areas where recurring hunger problems were predictable. In the longer term, greater focus was needed on supporting agricultural production and marketing, especially for small farmers. Governments should not commit to any expansion of corn and rapeseed biofuels until their true costs and benefits had been adequately determined.

32. The international aid system required a more integrated and coherent approach to food security. The United Nations Task Force on the Global Food Security Crisis was a useful step but much more was needed. The Task Force should actively draw on the field-based expertise of NGOs and other organizations. Finally, it was time Member States ceased acting as though food crises, cyclones and droughts were unconnected events.

33. **Mr. Borel** (International Chamber of Commerce) said that the International Chamber of Commerce (ICC) believed that success would depend on broad partnerships, coordinated actions and localized solutions. The private sector and the 1.3 billion farmers around the world were committed to being a part of the solution and he suggested that a representative of the private sector be included in the newly created Task Force.

34. The private sector supported expanded assistance by donors and governments to ensure access to agricultural inputs. It was also in favour of targeted support measures and safety nets for vulnerable populations, as long as they fostered long-term solutions.

35. Agriculture was the key to reducing poverty. The Secretary-General had called for a next generation green revolution to provide sustainable solutions, particularly in Africa. It was important to work with the world's poorest people and to provide them with the resources to help themselves. Solutions that were environmentally, economically and socially sustainable would gradually prime the pump of the rural economy. Since the 1960s, technologies and improved agricultural practices had helped some farmers to increase their yields by as much as 130 per cent. Others, however, were unable to boost their productivity because they lacked access to credit, technology, collaborative extension services and global markets.

36. Several key steps were needed, starting with research into techniques for sustainable agriculture and water management. In the context of climate change, public and private researchers should collaborate to develop crops that were resistant to drought and heat; these should then be made accessible to all.

37. Second, extension and agronomy programming should be at a local level, to ensure that productivity increases were sustainable. Third, stewardship training in agricultural best practices should be increased at the local level, since it was the primary means of encouraging integrated approaches to crop management. Finally, land tenure should be secure and female farmers should be recognized as land owners. Women played a key role across sectors and at all levels of society and their contributions should be recognized and valued.

Statements by Member States, Agencies, Funds and Programmes

Statement by the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of Spain

38. **Mr. Moratinos** (Spain) said that the United Nations and the Secretary-General were taking the right steps to prevent the food crisis from becoming an irreversible global humanitarian tragedy. The Global Framework for Action and the Task Force ensured the implementation and follow-up of plans to confront rising food prices. Those measures among others would pave the way for the high-level conference on "World Food Security: The Challenges of Climate Change and Bioenergy" to take place in Rome in June.

39. The common international agenda required unwavering support, including financial support, to mitigate the effects of the crisis. Together with development policies designed to meet the challenge, donor countries must increase the capacity of countries which, due to scarce resources, were net food importers. Food insecurity translated into hunger and poverty and was a breeding ground for destabilization. It was no exaggeration to declare that without food security there would be no global security.

40. The food crisis was a result of a variety of factors, including increased oil prices, declining support to agriculture, speculation in food products and export restrictions. Furthermore, the crisis was having a negative impact on flows of world food aid, particularly with regard to the most vulnerable populations. Many studies also pointed to a direct relationship between the rise in first-generation biofuel production and the rise in food prices. More support was needed for agricultural research. Moreover, Africa must be given priority: of the 37 countries in need of external food aid, 21 were on that continent.

41. Spain was increasing its contribution to food aid agencies, particularly to support small farmers, family food security and food sovereignty in the least developed, middle- and low-income countries. It favoured the purchase of food products in local or regional markets and increased support to regional and local rural development associations.

42. Political and diplomatic dialogue were essential. The means were available to end the crisis, and his Government supported the adoption of a global food agenda and the forthcoming summit.

Statement by the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs and Human Rights of France

43. **Ms. Yade** (France) said that food security was a global challenge that required a coordinated and coherent response from the entire international community in order to address that humanitarian disaster that could represent a threat to global security. There was little likelihood that food prices would return to earlier levels any time soon. One of the main causes of the food crisis was the declining investment in agricultural development. The international community must mobilize for the revitalization of agricultural production. Major efforts in investment, coordination and research would be needed, and France intended to play an active role in the process.

44. In order to respond to the emergency, France had decided to double its budget allocation for food aid to assist United Nations agencies, NGOs and affected countries. In order to find a sustainable response to the food crisis, however, France saw the need for a global partnership for agriculture and food aimed at mobilizing the international community and relevant agencies and organizations in the food aid and agricultural development sectors. The partnership would determine the causes of the current crisis, propose the short, medium and long-term measures needed to overcome it, provide a coordinated and effective strategy, ensure adequate financing and help international mechanisms to adapt to the challenges of food security.

45. The international community should support the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and the World Food Programme (WFP) in their process of reform and reorientation and encourage greater cooperation among them. More effort was also needed to support research to increase agricultural productivity that took into account climate change and biodiversity.

46. Renewed investment was needed in agricultural development through a long-term recommitment of development finance institutions in the agricultural sector, mobilization of global investment of savings in the agricultural processing industry and finding new and sustainable resources through innovative financing mechanisms. Financing for that global policy could be provided either by existing institutions like IFAD or through a global fund established for that purpose that would work with the relevant institutions. Combating hunger and food insecurity was an enormous challenge; it could only be met effectively through a global, coordinated strategy.

47. **Ms. Viotti** (Brazil), reading out a statement by the President of Brazil, said that the recent increases in food prices worldwide could jeopardize institutional stability, and a humanitarian disaster was a real threat. Action was needed on different fronts, both through emergency measures to contain the most adverse effects of the crisis, and through analysis of the complex causes of the crisis. Higher prices of oil and, consequently, of fertilizers, energy and transportation had all had a significant impact on food production costs. Seasonal price fluctuations, aggravated by crop failures due to climate, along with realignment of exchange rates and financial speculation on commodities, had played a role as well.

48. However, it was important to remember that in several developing countries, an increasing number of people were eating more and better. However, current international structures were not designed to incorporate those new consumers smoothly. Food production and distribution must be improved, but above all, the conditions must be created for poor countries to produce their own food. Poorer countries suffered a double vulnerability: they could neither afford food at ever-increasing prices nor produce it locally in sufficient quantities to feed their own populations.

49. Farm subsidies in rich countries made it impossible for poor farmers to compete in international markets, leading to dependency on imported food and foreign aid. Agricultural subsidies rewarded inefficiency, perpetuated the privileges of a few and aggravated the hunger of many. In the Doha Round, Brazil favoured an agreement that placed agricultural products under the World Trade Organization (WTO) once and for all.

50. Enforcing fair rules in international agricultural trade was fundamental, not only to eradicate hunger but to reconcile environmental protection with energy security. Biofuels had been blamed by oil interests for both the rise in food prices and global warming, but Brazil had over 30 years of success with sugar cane-based ethanol. Its use had led to drastic cuts in CO2 emissions and reduced demand for fossil energy, to the point of virtual self-sufficiency in energy with no

effect on food production. Biofuels were a source of clean and cheap renewable energy and generated income and jobs, especially in rural areas. It was hard to understand why ethanol imports were taxed while oil was exempted from import duties, at a time when the international community was discussing alternatives to fossil fuels.

51. Brazil did not intend to impose its model on others. The potential for biofuels should be assessed according to each country's reality. It would be irresponsible, however, to preclude that strategic option for countries that had neither oil nor food. Brazil would sponsor an international conference on biofuels in 2008.

52. **Mr. Blake** (Antigua and Barbuda), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that the global food crisis, together with the global financial, energy and climate crises, posed a multi-dimensional challenge for development. Several agencies were already responding to the proximate cause and he stressed that coordination of action was critical in order to avoid putting unnecessary pressures on the Governments at the centre of the crisis. In that connection, he welcomed the newly established Task Force, which could make a major contribution to policy coordination.

53. While there were multiple proximate causes, the crisis was essentially a development challenge. The failure of international economic and trade policy of the last quarter century had discouraged agriculture, in particular food production in developing countries, and had reoriented the tastes of populations in developing countries, including in rural areas, away from domestically produced foods to imported foods.

54. The responsibility for coordinating action to deal with developmental challenges rested mainly with the United Nations and the Council. It might be appropriate to consider, inter alia, the Council's future actions, including the staging of a high-level thematic debate on food security at the beginning of the sixty-third session; the Council's relationship to the Secretary-General's Task Force and the need for debate on the linkage between the food crisis and the other interrelated crises; whether there was a role for publicly generated technology or a need for an early warning system on food security.

55. **Ms. Štiglic** (Slovenia) speaking on behalf of the European Union; the candidate countries Croatia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Turkey; the stabilization and association process countries Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Montenegro; and, in addition, Armenia, Georgia and Moldova, said that while rising food prices had affected everyone, it was the poor who suffered the most. Moreover, unless there was an immediate response, the security situation in a number of countries could be gravely jeopardized.

56. The present situation highlighted the urgent need to reach comprehensive targets for reduction in carbon dioxide (CO2) emissions and to assist developing countries in adapting to the effects of climate change, including in the agricultural sector. Long-term sustainable measures were also needed to benefit the overall development of the agricultural sector, especially in developing countries. For too many years agriculture had been neglected in large parts of the world.

57. The challenge of high food prices was also an opportunity for concluding the Doha Round. The Doha Development Agenda needed to be brought to a successful conclusion with an ambitious, comprehensive and balanced outcome, including a reduction of trade-distorting subsidies. Many developing countries had a potential comparative advantage in agriculture which could make a substantial contribution to development.

58. Increased coordination of all international stakeholders was of vital importance, while respecting the "whole-of-government" approach. The outcomes of the Task Force on the Global Food Security Crisis should result in a comprehensive response that would enable the United Nations to deliver an effective and workable solution to contribute to alleviating the world food crisis.

59. The European Union had already provided food aid to the regions where the situation was the most critical and would mobilize resources to finance additional measures to provide safety nets for poor and vulnerable groups. It was also considering a variety of measures to reduce imbalances in food markets including promotion of investment in agriculture and rural development and the development of strong agricultural policies, especially in the least developed countries and in Africa. Rising food prices and food security required long-term attention and the European Union was ready to contribute to the global effort.

60. **Mr. Aslov** (Tajikistan), speaking on behalf of Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, said that although the need for measures to increase food production and ensure fair food distribution had been recognized as early as 1996, the situation had continued to deteriorate. Urgent measures were needed at both the national and international level in order to provide humanitarian assistance to the countries affected by the food crisis and address its fundamental cause.

61. Governments of the donor countries, the private sector and individuals in the developed countries should increase their support for assistance programmes implemented within WFP. The United Nations Task Force could also contribute, inter alia, through mobilization of additional sources of funding. At the Doha negotiations, the developed countries should agree to cancel food import restrictions and agricultural subsidies, while developing countries should be able to use such measures in order to achieve sustainable development of their agriculture and industry.

62. Grain crops production should be increased to stabilize markets. Many countries possessed large areas of fertile agricultural land that could be used for that purpose. The negative impact of human activities on the environment should be minimized. A more selective approach towards developing alternative energy sources should take into account both national interests and those of the entire international community. Advanced technologies could be used to develop sustainable biofuels that would not lead to disruption of life on the planet.

63. The current level of available technologies, even excluding transgenic technologies, was sufficient to supply food for twice the current population of the planet. It was essential to transfer advanced technologies to developing countries and to supply the latter with seeds and financial and technical assistance. The present meeting should be an effective step towards addressing the issue of global food security.

64. **Ms. Jahan** (Bangladesh) reviewed some of the factors underlying the current global food crisis, such as increased consumption, lower productivity, unfavourable weather conditions, the persistent asymmetry and distortions in the international agricultural trade system and the structural adjustment policies that many developing countries had implemented at the behest of the Bretton Woods institutions and that had ultimately undermined their food security.

65. World grain stocks were at an all-time low, and global food aid had also declined. The current surge in food prices was unlikely to prove a short-term phenomenon. Rather, it was a long-term challenge to achieving food security and a sustainable livelihood. Fully coordinated and committed action was therefore needed to address the unfolding catastrophe and to provide the poor and vulnerable with sufficient food. In the short term developing-country Governments should expand food or income transfers to the poor and ensure that WFP's call for $755 million was met immediately. International organizations, including the Bretton Woods institutions, should provide rapid and favourable financing facilities to the least developed countries and others with a food deficit.

66. Research and development, technology transfer and knowledge sharing were critically important to develop efficient agricultural production across the developing world. Financial insurance against crop failures should also be explored and promoted.

67. A successfully negotiated Doha Development Round could tackle the systemic distortions in the international market for food. The Task Force should recommend a cohesive and coherent inter-agency plan of action to address the challenges in the short-, medium- and long-term aspects. The forthcoming Rome summit would surely also adopt concrete measures.

68. Finally she proposed that an international food fund be established to deal with systemic threats to food security, perhaps under the auspices of the United Nations and the WFP. Given that the crisis was global, it required global solutions.

69. **Mr. Heller** (Mexico), speaking on behalf of the Rio Group, said that, given that finding a long-term response to the food crisis would require coordinated actions by the international community aimed at strengthening agricultural capacity and rural development, the Group welcomed the establishment of the Task Force on the Global Food Security Crisis.

70. The Group called for a successful conclusion of the Doha Round with the aim of removing agricultural subsidies. While recognizing each country's right to take measures to protect its population, domestic

measures that might affect world food markets should be avoided. In order to ensure a coherent approach to the food crisis, the issue should be addressed in the framework of the follow-up to the implementation of the Monterrey Consensus. The Group also hoped that the subject would be discussed at the forthcoming meeting on world food security in Rome.

71. **Mr. Hill** (Australia) said that while high commodity prices could be a catalyst for growth and poverty reduction in net exporting countries they could also lead to higher costs for consumers and net food importing countries. The international community needed to adopt practical measures that would provide relief to the most affected, while also taking steps to increase investment and productivity in the agricultural sectors of developing countries in the longer term.

72. His Government would provide 30 million Australian dollars in response to the WFP appeal, in addition to over 60 million Australian dollars for WFP operations in 2008. It urged other countries to follow Australia's lead in ensuring that food aid provided to WFP was untied. The dismantling of trade barriers must also be part of the international response as it would provide increased opportunities for developing countries to expand agricultural production and exports. His Government welcomed the establishment of the Secretary-General's Task Force and was ready to take an active role in its work.

73. **Mr. Akram** (Pakistan) said that the food crisis was not a new problem. Africa had experienced many such crises since 1998. In order to address the three main issues of supply, prices and distribution, it was essential to enlarge areas of food cultivation in developing countries. In addition, it was important to bring the Doha Round to a conclusion. However, for that to happen certain actions needed to be taken: export subsidies needed to be eliminated; industrial countries should stop protecting their agricultural systems; and an agreement needed to be concluded to ensure food security for the developing countries. In order to find a solution to the food crisis, it was necessary to attract funding, to develop technology and, above all, to count on the political will of the major countries in honouring their commitments.

74. **Mr. Muñoz** (Chile) said that it was important to find a solution to the food crisis before it became an even greater tragedy. His Government therefore welcomed the news that the Secretary-General's Task Force planned to present a plan of action at the upcoming meeting in Rome. After reviewing some of the causes of the food crisis he said that, while urgent measures needed to be taken to assist vulnerable countries and populations affected by high food prices, such measures were not a substitute for long-term strategies. He expressed concern at the role of speculative strategies that had the effect of maintaining high food prices, and pointed out that long-term solutions were needed in order to strengthen agricultural capacity and rural development, including greater investment in scientific and technological research, infrastructure and fertilizers.

75. His Government also welcomed other initiatives such as the Latin America and the Caribbean without Hunger Initiative of FAO and the Initiative on Action against Hunger and Poverty; it had made a significant financial contribution to the International Drug Purchase Facility (UNITAID). Recognizing that food crises could lead to social conflict, it supported the holding of a conference aimed at drafting a programme of food security and rural development for Haiti.

76. **Mr. Maurer** (Switzerland) said that the food crisis highlighted the lack of sustainability of the agricultural policies pursued in recent years and showed that priority should be given to local production and to supporting small farms. Access to expertise, genetic resources, financial services, markets and means of production needed to be improved. Additional private investment could be used to fund research on the adaptation of production techniques and on the management of natural resources to cope with climate change. Production must be increased in order to meet the growing needs of the world's population, but every possible measure must be taken to properly manage resources such as water, soil and bio-diversity. Given the need for greater coherence of the actions of the United Nations system, his delegation welcomed the establishment of the Secretary-General's Task Force on the Global Food Security Crisis.

77. Finally he said that Switzerland was committed to improving the situation of the poorest populations, especially in rural regions. It was encouraging the development of national food security policies on the basis of the right to food for all, promoting sustainable local crop production and the development of human and institutional capacities for agricultural research in developing countries. To meet the most immediate

needs, Switzerland had decided to make additional funds and experts available to WFP; additional targeted measures were under consideration.

78. **Mr. Kariyawasam** (Sri Lanka) welcomed the appointment by the Secretary-General of the Task Force on the Global Food Security Crisis and stressed that the right to food was a fundamental human right. In providing short-term emergency relief, it was important to ensure that specific measures were taken to protect the most vulnerable sectors of the world's population, including women, children, the elderly and those with disabilities.

79. After reviewing the various causes of the food crisis he said that while implementation of medium-term and long-term remedial action was primarily a national responsibility, it was essential to create a global framework in order to support action taken by national authorities, particularly the efforts aimed at increasing productivity levels of small-scale farmers in developing countries. All food security mechanisms — such as buffer stocks and resilient crops — would be more effective on a regional basis. All donor efforts needed to focus on sustainability, including enhancing the capacity and purchasing power of developing countries and providing the poor with preferential market access. Given the breadth and depth of the issues involved in the food crisis, it was essential for the Task Force to adopt a plan of action that was comprehensive and sustainable in the long term and that could count on the collective support of Member States.

80. **Mr. Donnelly** (Caritas Internationalis) said that the global food crisis was intimately connected with a variety of issues such as human rights, climate change mitigation, fair trade and peace and security. At its recent meeting, the Civil Society Forum on the Global Food Crisis had recommended increasing food aid and improving efficiency by allowing for local purchase when appropriate, and removing commodity export and import restrictions, except if such restrictions were needed to ensure basic domestic food security. It had further recommended that developed countries, the United Nations, the World Bank and International Monetary Fund should offer low-interest lines of credit and budget support to help Governments provide food and cash assistance and encourage larger percentages of national budgets to be devoted to agriculture. They should also provide policy support aimed at strengthening social protection structures and promoting increased agricultural production.

81. In the long term, it recommended reversing the marginalization of smallholder and subsistence farmers and increasing the production of staple crops. All farmers, especially women and marginalized groups, should be provided with agricultural education, land tenure and credit infrastructure development and rural infrastructure development. United Nations agencies should carefully consider the advantages and disadvantages of different technologies for increasing agricultural production. For example, genetically modified crops were not suited to meet the needs of most small-scale farmers in the developing world. Technologies that were suited to small-scale farmers should be emphasized instead, including ecological and low-input farming practices. While biofuels had great potential to meet energy needs without damaging the environment, developed countries should reconsider plans for ethanol production in view of the latest warnings about adverse impacts on food production and relatively low greenhouse gas reduction.

82. Another recommendation for the long term was that civil society, including grass-roots organizations and farmers' cooperatives, be fully engaged in the decision-making process, and that developed countries should provide the necessary funding to enable developing countries to achieve the Millennium Development Goals. In order to promote sustainable agricultural production in developing countries, trade subsidies in developed countries should be dismantled and market access for developing country agricultural exports should be improved. Finally, developing countries needed assistance to adapt to climate change, which was contributing to the food crisis and could be expected to have a greater effect in the future.

The meeting rose at 6 p.m.

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Economic and Social Council

Provisional

24 June 2008

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Special meeting on the global food crisis

Provisional summary record of the 8th meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Wednesday, 21 May 2008, at 3 p.m.

Chairman: Mr. Mérorès ..... (Haiti)

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Statements by Member States, agencies, funds and programmes (*continued*)

Statement by the President of the Economic and Social Council

Corrections to this record should be submitted in one of the working languages. They should be set forth in a memorandum and also incorporated in a copy of the record. They should be sent *within one week of the date of this document* to the Chief, Official Records Editing Section, room DC2-750, 2 United Nations Plaza.

08-34886 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

Statements by Member States (*continued*)

1. **Mr. Takasu** (Japan) recalled that Prime Minister Fukuda, in his capacity as the Chair of the G-8 had announced his intention to take action on global food prices as a priority issue at the next G-8 Summit and had requested input from the United Nations system. At the forthcoming Fourth Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD IV), measures would be devised to strengthen agricultural production in African countries.

2. The newly established Task Force on the Global Good Security Crisis was to prepare a comprehensive plan of action for consideration at the High-Level Conference on World Food Security in Rome. That Conference should produce a firm political commitment to tackle the crisis and a road map with guidelines and timelines for international action. A well-coordinated response from the United Nations system organizations and international financial institutions was essential and the plan of action would serve as the basis for international collective action.

3. Escalating food prices had already triggered social and economic unrest in many developing countries. The international community should start by focusing on emergency food aid. Japan had already pledged $100 million for emergency food aid over a three-month period. However, that was not enough. Equal attention should be given to longer-term strategies to increase domestic food production and establish food security in each State. For a long time, agriculture and food production in developing countries had not received the high priority they deserved in terms of budget allocation, financial assistance, investments and technology research and development. Technical and financial assistance was needed to improve food production capacities and food stocks in developing countries, including Africa. The upcoming TICAD IV would be an opportunity to discuss the promotion of agricultural production and productivity through measures such as capacity-building, irrigation and other infrastructure development. Japan would contribute to doubling rice production in Africa in collaboration with other countries and organizations, in part through dissemination of a new high-yield breed of rice that was tolerant of dryness and pests. Biofuel production should be compatible with the need for food security.

4. With the present high level of momentum and political commitment for international collective action, the present challenge offered an opportunity to achieve food security for all. Japan was ready to take the lead in tackling that common challenge.

5. **Mr. Gonsalves** (Saint Vincent and the Grenadines) said that the current crisis was merely a symptom of deeper structural flaws in the global economic system. Food scarcity and high prices had already led to riots and political instability within the CARICOM region. His country would continue to provide modest assistance to the most affected CARICOM States, but far more needed to be done.

6. His Government was attempting to mitigate the escalating cost of imported food by increasing local production. The National Food Production Plan provided for free fertilizer to producers of staple foods; distribution of subsidized seedlings; scientific screening of crop varieties; aggressive use of tissue cultures; financial assistance for agricultural diversification; and increased farmer education.

7. Those local measures could not insulate the country against price increases and shortages. Unequal trade liberalization damaged competition and climate change was ruining age-old farming and fishing livelihoods. Production of biofuels in their current form was irresponsible and should be halted; agricultural subsidies should also be eliminated. He therefore welcomed the pledges made by the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Japan and the United Kingdom to provide food aid and hoped that other States would consider similar initiatives. Petroleum-producing States also had a special role to play in mitigating the current emergency. After congratulating the Secretary-General on his announcement of a high-level task force and stressing the crucial importance of fisheries in any analysis of food supply, he reminded States of the importance of meeting their ODA commitments and of cooperating with developing States to produce better crops.

8. The high consumption levels of a minority of people on the planet were irreparably damaging the planet's health and productive capacity. Although the polluters were not currently suffering the effects of changing weather patterns, they had a moral obligation to take steps to remedy the situation. Unless structural changes were made to the economic system and production structures, the situation was likely to get

much worse. The international community should resolve to tackle not only the current emergency but also the root causes of the issue.

9. **Mr. Natalegawa** (Indonesia) said that the current crisis was caused by interlinked factors, ranging from increased demand to declining rates of productivity growth. Rising energy prices affected farmers' costs and their access to necessities such as fertilizers. The international trading system, including agricultural subsidies in developed economies, had also had an adverse impact. The solution had to be a multi-pronged and sustained approach that was comprehensive and coordinated.

10. The first imperative was to reach those most affected through the World Food Programme (WFP). In the long term, a sustainable global platform for food security was needed. Agriculture and rural development were important, not only for sustainable development, but also for global stability. Agricultural policies should be reviewed with a view to increasing production. Comprehensive action to address climate change with both adaptation and mitigation actions would contribute to global food security and the Doha Development Round should be concluded as soon as possible.

11. His delegation welcomed the Secretary-General's decision to establish a task force to deal with global food crisis and suggested that a global mechanism should be established to serve as an early warning system on food security. It might also be worth considering the possibility of a high-level meeting that would focus on food security at the beginning of its sixty-third session of the General Assembly. All nations would need to work together to deal with the crisis.

12. **Mr. Abdelaziz** (Egypt) said that the recent leap in commodity prices would have grave consequences for developing countries' efforts to achieve the internationally agreed development goals. The international community must act swiftly to deal with the crisis which was due to a variety of factors including climate change, increased biofuel production and the negative effects of trade-distorting agricultural subsidies in developed countries, particularly in the light of the impasse in the Doha Development Agenda negotiations.

13. Lack of interest in development of the agricultural sector in developing countries over the past few years, particularly from the international financial institutions, had also contributed to the current crisis. The share of investments and ODA devoted to agriculture was low. Food security was the most immediate goal, as it directly impacted progress towards other development goals.

14. He hoped that the international initiatives proposed in response to the crisis would all be implemented. The outcome of the current meeting would provide input for the high-level meeting in Rome which was intended to mobilize international support and produce a concrete plan of action. Increased coordination and coherence between all the initiatives and meetings was crucial.

15. The current crisis required concrete policy actions at the national, regional and international levels, with provision of sufficient policy space for developing countries, and actions on an immediate, medium-term and long-term basis. The Secretary-General's call to provide immediate support for WFP and FAO, while also working on medium and long-term responses, was a good example in that regard. The recently established Task Force would present a comprehensive plan of action to the high-level conference in Rome. All Member States should be involved in its follow-up. Finally he supported the idea of holding a high-level debate at the beginning of the sixty-third session of the General Assembly to take stock of the situation.

16. **Mr. Normandin** (Canada) said that the international community should bear in mind the potential impact of the food crisis on progress related to the Millennium Development Goals. In response to emergency needs, Canada had not only recently increased its annual food aid by US$ 50 million, but had also announced the untying of all its food aid contributions, with a view to providing Canada's food aid partners with greater flexibility for procurement of food commodities and improved response capabilities. Over the long term, policies that promoted supply in developing countries would be most effective.

17. Canada appealed to all countries to allow unhindered humanitarian access to ensure that food supplies would be delivered to those most in need. In addition, it was important to further analyse the specific implications of the food crisis on fragile States and to take into account the situation in such States when developing a coordinated international response.

Finally, it was crucial to look to medium- and long-term solutions that addressed the underlying causes of the global food crisis, to strengthen governance, to develop sound agricultural policies and to promote trade reforms that focused on increasing global food security.

18. **Mr. Mansour** (Tunisia), noting that many people affected by the global food crisis lived in rural areas, said that it was of the utmost importance to invest in agriculture and to enable greater access to markets for those areas, so as to increase agricultural production and provide higher incomes for farmers. Given that a great number of regions were suffering from hunger, it might be necessary to re-evaluate prospects for achieving the Millennium Development Goals while bearing in mind that any prolonged food crisis could lead to instability. International institutions working in finance and trade must focus increasingly on food production policy and food must be a key focus of the Doha trade negotiations.

19. Finally, he recalled that the President of Tunisia had recently called for all oil-rich countries to contribute one dollar for every barrel of oil to the World Solidarity Fund, with a view to protecting the world from famine and instability.

20. **Mr. Sen** (India) said that the real cause of the current crisis was not rising consumption levels in developing countries — for that had been going on for a decade — but rather excessive and unsustainable consumption levels in developed countries.

21. The past two years had seen a 1 per cent annual increase in oil demand, yet oil prices had risen by 90 per cent. It was not just a question of high oil prices affecting food prices: low food prices and high oil prices had encouraged the sale of food grains to energy producers for conversion into energy. In several developed countries, land used for food crops had been lost to biofuels. He therefore welcomed the call for the elimination of biofuels made on the previous day.

22. The financial crisis had also had a direct impact as speculators, encouraged by the dollar's relative decline, had "invested" in food futures. That bubble would eventually burst and bring down prices at least marginally.

23. The Special Rapporteur on the right to food, had pointed, in a recent report, to a system-wide incoherence for whereas FAO, WFP and UNDP were working for that right, the Bretton Woods institutions were advising countries not just to export surplus food (which was appropriate) but to shift from food crops for the domestic population to cash crops for export (which was harmful). When Malawi had ignored that advice and had reintroduced fertilizer and seed subsidies, it had rapidly become self-sufficient and even a net exporter of food. He therefore objected to any suggestion of eliminating restrictions on food exports in the interests of market purism. Such advice from the Bretton Woods institutions was partly responsible for the crisis in the first place.

24. The international community could do a lot collectively. The International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) could look at solutions for the problems of small and marginal farmers and other international bodies could look at key areas such as land development, water management and seed technology. During the Green Revolution, improved seeds had been available and the intellectual property rights (IPR) had been in the public domain. Now, thanks to the Agreement on Trade-related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS Agreement), those rights were in the private domain and were contributing to food price inflation. Addressing TRIPS was as important as eliminating agricultural subsidies in the developed countries, and he was pleased that the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom had acknowledged as much at the previous meeting.

25. Finally, as the Prime Minister of India had pointed out, a new global compact was needed, a compact between the developed and developing countries, between the land surplus and labour surplus economies and between food exporters and food importers.

26. **Mr. Løvald** (Norway) said that Norway had already pledged the equivalent of $20 million to counter the humanitarian consequences of the food crisis in Africa, of which $12 million would be allocated to WFP activities in a number of African countries. It had also provided support to the Exogenous Shocks Facility administered by the IMF.

27. As no single institution or agency could resolve the hunger crisis, his delegation welcomed the Secretary-General's Task Force and its broad perspective. Partnerships and coordination within the United Nations and other humanitarian and development actors were vitally important.

Coordination could be improved by involving the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) and the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) and by making the most of the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF), to which Norway was a leading contributor.

28. Increasing in agricultural production and rural development was an obvious priority and should be combined with measures to ensure that the farmers themselves, including smallholders, were able to benefit more directly from the prices paid by consumers. The private sector could contribute to achieving real results in agriculture. Norway had engaged Yara, the world's leading plant nutrient company, in a public-private partnership aimed at ensuring timely and affordable supplies of fertilizers to small farmers for the next planting season.

29. The substantial reduction of developed countries' agricultural subsidies and tariffs was an important issue in the Doha Round negotiations. Norway was committed to doing its part to comply with the mandate of those negotiations.

30. While agreeing that biofuels policies must be consistent with food security and environmental sustainability, he said that biofuels were not necessarily a major factor in the increase in food prices. The issue merited further study and careful monitoring. Finally, he said that Norway was willing to work to counter the effects of the global food crisis. Developing countries should not have to carry the full economic burden of the cost increases.

31. **Mr. Borg** (Malta) said that, as a net food importing country, Malta was particularly concerned about the impact of the food crisis. The rise in food prices had aptly been described as a "silent tsunami", which was affecting millions worldwide. His delegation therefore welcomed the decision to create a high-level Task Force on the subject.

32. Discussions should focus on sustainable agriculture. Many farmers in developing countries could not afford the necessary equipment; assistance from the international community would help increase food production and create new work opportunities. Climate change was also affecting water supplies, and that could lead to regional instability. A coordinated response led by the United Nations and involving all stakeholders was therefore essential.

33. **Ms. Blum** (Colombia) said that the causes of the food crisis were complex and called for an objective, comprehensive analysis. The General Assembly was one valuable forum for discussion. Colombia welcomed the creation of the Task Force, and called for communication mechanisms to be established between Member States.

34. The food crisis had drawn attention to the importance of addressing the imbalances in the international trading system. There was a pressing need for developed countries to commit to reducing in protectionist measures and agricultural subsidies, which discouraged agricultural investment in the developing world.

35. The growing energy demand was also a concern. However, misgivings about the use of biofuels were not necessarily justified. In Colombia, the production of biofuels from crops such as sugar cane and palm oil had boosted the agricultural sector and created thousands of jobs without affecting food production. Nonetheless, given the increase in global fuel demand, it was essential to promote cooperation with the developing world through capacity-building, technology transfer and increased international market access.

36. **Ms. Banks** (New Zealand) said that there was a need not only for immediate food security to those already dependent on humanitarian aid, but also for long-term investment in agriculture in the countries most affected. Reform of agricultural markets was essential, as were tariff reductions. For those reasons, a successful and rapid conclusion to the Doha Round of negotiations was urgently required.

37. New Zealand welcomed the newly created Task Force, and looked forward to the forthcoming Conference on World Food Security.

38. **Ms. de Chamorro** (Nicaragua), after thanking Japan and the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela for their recent pledges regarding increased emergency food aid, expressed her delegation's support for the Task Force created by the Secretary-General, and stressed that any proposed strategy needed to be debated and approved by the General Assembly.

39. The deeper causes of the crisis stemmed from an international economic order detrimental to farming in developing countries. Her delegation hoped that the various activities and meetings scheduled for the

coming months including the Doha Round and the sixty-third session of the General Assembly would create the political will for a radical change in the world economic order. Finally, she pointed out that Nicaragua had asked the Secretary-General to circulate a document with the findings of the recent summit on food security held in Managua.

40. **Mr. Davide** (Philippines) said that the Philippines had called for a thematic debate on the food crisis in the course of the sixty-second session of the General Assembly, and for a high-level event to be convened thereafter.

41. In particular, it was important to provide funds to the International Rice Research Institute in the Philippines, the world's main repository of rice seeds and of genetic and other information on rice. The spread of brown plant hoppers was affecting rice harvests in East Asia.

42. As professor Jeffrey Sachs had asserted recently, the fate of global society depended on its developing new forms of global cooperation. The sixty-second session of the General Assembly must seek to carry out that task.

43. **Mr. Reina** (Honduras), referring to some of the causes of the food crisis — such as agricultural subsidies, the energy crisis, climate change and international trade barriers — said that although his country had been working to make progress in implementing the Millennium Development Goals, particularly with respect to chronic and acute malnutrition, rising food prices threatened to endanger further progress. Moreover, although renewable biofuels represented a huge economic potential, production of biofuels must not be allowed to endanger food security. He stressed the need for strategies aimed at providing farmers in developing countries with training seeds, fertilizer and equipment so that they could increase their production and make a decent living.

44. The Latin American and Caribbean countries had been discussing such topics at the regional ministerial conference for the eradication of child malnutrition and, at a recent meeting in Lima, between the Heads of State of those countries and the European Union a proposal had been made to establish a green fund in order to facilitate full implementation of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

45. **Ms. Gallardo Hernández** (El Salvador), noting that factors such as the economic crisis in the United States of America and rising fuel prices had contributed to the food crisis, said that Professor Sachs had rightly stressed the need for the international community to continue supporting farmers in middle-income countries. New funding mechanisms were needed to help developing countries overcome the crisis. In that connection, France's proposal for a global partnership for food and agriculture looked promising.

46. El Salvador was proposing joint action on a regional level, and had established a multidisciplinary commission to consider domestic responses. In that regard, the country had the capacity to expand cultivation, but it lacked the necessary technology. A law to expand cultivated land was under consideration, as was a project to distribute improved seed varieties to farmers. Her Government remained committed to the collective and multilateral search for solutions.

47. **Mr. Yousfi** (Algeria), said that the current food crisis, exacerbated by commodity market speculation, had revealed systemic dysfunctions of the world economy which required structural solutions. Rather than rising oil prices, the major factor in the crisis had been the growing monopoly of a number of international companies on certain agricultural commodities. Another factor was shrinking agricultural production in developing countries following the implementation of agricultural policies recommended by the World Trade Organization, which were based on comparative advantage and focused on boosting trade flows.

48. The newly established Task Force on the Global Food Security Crisis should establish the bases for a global strategic framework of action in the short and long term to deal with the effects of the current food crisis. The immediate priority was to provide food to the hungry by increasing food aid but longer-term solutions were needed, especially with regard to increasing agricultural productivity. In that regard, it was essential to ensure close coordination of national and international policies on production of agricultural staples. Furthermore, the international community must support the gradual incorporation of the right to food in the context of food security and, more broadly, human security.

49. **Mr. Wolfe** (Jamaica) said that the food crisis would impact negatively on development and international food security. In the medium to long term, progress toward achievement of the Millennium Development Goals might well be stymied.

50. The increase in the price of fertilizer and animal feed had served to exacerbate an already dismal situation in his country. As a result, the Government had launched a series of national initiatives in an effort to promote agricultural activities and reduce duties on certain food imports. At the regional level, the Caribbean Community had recently held a special meeting to examine the impact of food prices on the living standards in the region. The Latin American and Caribbean Economic System would soon be convening a High-level Regional Meeting on Food Security in Latin America and the Caribbean, in Caracas, in order to formulate responses to deal with the crisis and coordinate common regional positions in preparation for the upcoming Conference in Rome.

51. Long-term investment in agriculture at the national, regional and international levels was critical in order to prevent similar situations in the future. Countries should, at the very least, strive to produce enough to satisfy domestic consumption. It was equally important to achieve a timely and successful conclusion of the Doha Development Round. In the short term, contributions to humanitarian agencies such as the World Food Programme must be stepped up.

52. His delegation looked forward to receiving the recommendations of the newly established Task Force on the Global Food Security Crisis and agreed with those delegations which had suggested that those recommendations should be presented to the General Assembly for further review.

53. **Ms. Aitimova** (Kazakhstan) said that the worsening situation of the world economy and the food crisis had cancelled out the impact of all previous humanitarian efforts by the international community and it would now be difficult to achieve the Millennium Development Goals. Many countries in diverse regions of the world were experiencing food shortages.

54. In view of the growing food shortage in world markets, Kazakhstan was taking measures to ensure its own food security. The Government was allocating funds from its reserves for the purchase of basic food products and storing them close to major cities in preparation for external food crises. It had also placed a temporary ban on corn exports until the next harvest in order to stabilize the domestic food market.

55. Kazakhstan, a leading producer of corn, also had enormous potential in its livestock production, which was based on ecologically and genetically sound methods. As high fuel costs, the financial crisis and the food crisis were causing inflation throughout the world. Kazakhstan could play a significant role in both the energy and food spheres.

56. As the President of Kazakhstan had stated at the World Economic Forum on the Middle East in Sharm el-Sheikh, if the world financial crisis was a problem then the world food crisis was a tragedy for millions of people on the planet. That crisis could only be resolved through coordinated action from the international community. Kazakhstan hoped that the Secretary-General's Task Force would be successful in its work and also welcomed the fact that the world food crisis would be discussed at the FAO Conference in June and at the next G-8 summit. Those meetings should contribute to finding effective ways of overcoming the global food crisis. Kazakhstan would submit its own proposals for addressing the problem.

57. **Mr. Hannesson** (Iceland) said that his Government stood ready to do its part in taking necessary measures to resolve the international food crisis; it had already responded to the extraordinary appeal of the World Food Programme to meet emergency needs.

58. Given that gender equality in agriculture was of paramount importance in addressing the crisis, the Icelandic International Development Agency had cooperated with partner countries in promoting equal rights and active participation by women in the economy, thus strengthening local food security. Iceland had also stepped up support for the work of the United Nations Development Fund for Women.

59. In an effort to contribute to sustainable solutions, Iceland would soon be launching a United Nations University programme on soil technology, based on its long experience in reclaiming land from erosion. It had also developed the United Nations University Fisheries Training Programme, which reflected the country's emphasis on the importance of providing training and sharing technology for sustainable fisheries, as major contributors to the food supply of some the world's poorest peoples. Enhancing food security and

increasing food production had been at the core of Iceland's bilateral development cooperation, which had focused on capacity-building projects in southern Africa, Asia and Central America, mainly in the field of fisheries. Additional Government-led measures were currently under consideration.

60. **Mr. Sow** (Guinea) said that Guinea had been particularly affected by the current crisis, resulting from the combined effects of rising oil prices, climate change, decreasing official development assistance and the financial market crisis — all at a time when the new Government's reforms had just begun to bear fruit. In response to the food crisis, the Government had taken steps to provide for its population in the short, medium and long term. Urgent measures included establishing a National Council for Food Security, the signing of a private-public partnership for stimulating agricultural development, the creation of funds to finance agreements, and the adoption of a national action plan on climate change.

61. To revitalize the agricultural sector, which had great potential, Guinea was also relying on the synergies created through common initiatives to be taken by key stakeholders at the local, regional and international levels. In that connection, he welcomed the recent Mano River Union Summit on the problems generated by the food crisis.

62. **Mr. Matenje** (Malawi) said that the food crisis required urgent, collective action by the international community, but, even more importantly, by national Governments. Over the past three years, his Government had launched bold initiatives to help farmers buy basic agricultural inputs, and, as a result, his country had produced more food than it needed in all three seasons. In support of the subsidy programme, the Government was scaling up extension services so as to transfer knowledge and skills to small farmers. The Government was also investing in irrigation and water development as a long-term strategy to ensure sustained food security. The implementation of such initiatives, whose overall aim was to bring down the cost of food and make Malawi a hunger-free nation, involved all stakeholders; in that regard, steps had been taken to ensure the full participation of women, who accounted for around 70 per cent of all Malawi smallholder farmers.

63. However, external factors continued to imperil the progress made thus far. His delegation therefore supported developing measures towards a concrete action plan; in particular, it agreed that the food crisis should be a focus at the sixty-third session of the General Assembly. He called upon the international community to assist developing countries, especially the least developed countries, to adapt to and mitigate the effects of climate change. It was also crucial for the international community to eliminate agricultural subsidies and tariffs during the Doha Development Round in order to stimulate economic growth in developing countries.

64. **Mr. Bui The Giang** (Viet Nam) said that, in response to the global food crisis, his Government had implemented a number of immediate measures to stimulate the economy and support the agricultural sector. The situation in Viet Nam had essentially returned to normal, with the curbing of food prices and the right to food being guaranteed to the majority of the population, especially the poor. The Mekong Delta, i.e. the main rice paddy stock of Viet Nam, had just recorded a bumper harvest, thereby ensuring domestic food security and enabling the country to honour existing rice export contracts and to consider signing new contracts. His Government was working closely with foreign partners on possible rice trade agreements, notably with Asian and African countries, and was preparing for the upcoming Fourth Tokyo International Conference on African Development.

65. There was no single solution to the global food crisis, nor could it be solved by any one nation. Meeting the needs of the hungry was an immediate priority; in the long term, it would be imperative to raise the awareness of policymakers and the general population on the vital role of agriculture and the need for investment in the sector. Developed countries should follow through on their commitments to finance development, especially in the agricultural sector, and to provide further technical assistance in agricultural capacity-building and technological transfer. The continued support of donors for South-South cooperation in agriculture was also crucial.

66. **Mr. del Rosario Ceballos** (Dominican Republic) said that he would like to see the General Assembly take on a more active role in addressing the global food crisis. The Secretary-General played an important role in mobilizing the resources and interests of the United Nations system to deal with the present challenges.

67. In Latin America and the Caribbean, as elsewhere, rising food prices were affecting the poorest areas the hardest. In the Dominican Republic, the combined effects of rising oil prices, high food prices and recent natural disasters were likely to stifle the economy. It was thus crucial to formulate a new approach to global food policy that, rather than focusing solely on hunger or malnutrition, also encompassed energy, climate change, subsidies, investment and other issues, all of which were interconnected.

68. To help mitigate the effects of the crisis, the President had proposed that two funds be created: a Global Food Solidarity Fund and a Global Oil Assistance Fund, both of which would be aimed at helping developing countries that imported primarily food and fuel. The Funds, which could be supported by countries having benefited from the high oil prices and developed countries having reduced their official development assistance, would be used to provide social protection measures immediately to the most vulnerable groups. Aid would be provided in the form of concessional loans with low interest rates, extended grace periods payable over the long term. Thus the financial surpluses generated in oil-exporting countries would be recycled to help reinvigorate the world economy.

69. **Ms. Núñez Mordoche** (Cuba) said that while sustainability criteria for the production of biofuels could be discussed, the exclusion of staples such as grains was absolutely essential; anything else would pose a serious threat to food security and the enjoyment of the right to food as a basic human right. It was important to consider the various underlying causes of the crisis, such as the unequal distribution of wealth at the global level and within individual countries, which made the rich richer and the poor poorer.

70. Unregulated trade had created unlimited opportunities for multinational agribusinesses. Instead of promoting a balanced trade system that took into account the needs of developing countries, WTO had strengthened the position of the dominant players internationally. Indeed, the demands being made as part of the Doha Development Round for developing countries to further liberalize trade would merely increase their dependence on food imports. Over time, the mass import of food, usually highly subsidized, had discouraged local production and agricultural investment in developing countries, causing the agricultural sector to sink into a state of utter neglect. Moreover, the failure of developed countries to meet their official development assistance commitments had dealt developing countries a terrible blow.

71. If the issues of energy crisis and climate change were to be addressed effectively, developed countries must lead the way by changing their unsustainable production and consumption patterns; meeting their commitments under the Kyoto Protocol without pursuing new conditions; and setting more ambitious goals with regard to emissions reductions under the agenda adopted at the United Nations Climate Change Conference. The Doha Round must become a truly productive development forum. Governments needed to build up their food reserves at the national and regional levels in order to tackle the problems engendered by price volatility and food insecurity. It was also time to discipline the large multinational corporations of the agroindustry and energy sector by introducing a tax on their profits. The money would go into a United Nations fund for agriculture in developing countries.

72. UNDP and other agencies should shift part of their efforts to facilitate the transfer of modern agricultural technology to developing countries and to assist in building the capacity necessary for the urgent transformation required in the agricultural sector, including the development of basic infrastructure. He welcomed the newly established Task Force and expressed the hope that its results would be submitted to Member States for consideration.

73. **Mr. Olinger** (Luxembourg) commended the initiative to hold the special meeting on the global food crisis as an example of the revitalization of the Economic and Social Council. The international response required actions in the short, medium and long term as part of a coherent strategy. In the short term, emergency food aid must be increased, while ensuring that humanitarian assistance did not have unintended consequences. His Government had made an immediate contribution of €1.3 million in emergency aid to WFP and had intensified its cooperation with its partner countries in West Africa. It was working with the Government of Niger to apply the lessons learned from the 2005 food crisis in that country to take preventive action, as well.

74. In the medium and long term, coherence among global agricultural policies and the effects of climate change must be taken into consideration. The Doha Round must be completed from a development perspective, and policies regarding biofuels must be re-examined. Above all, investment in agriculture in developing countries was key, in order to increase food security. The crisis must be transformed into an opportunity for a "green revolution", especially in Africa.

75. **Mr. Okio** (Congo) said that the continuing deterioration in the food situation called into question highly-publicized commitments regarding food and sustainable development made at various meetings over the past decade, starting with the World Food Summit in 1996. Immediate measures included increased investment in agricultural development and research, protection of biodiversity, reform of trade policy and stabilization of oil prices. Observance of the International Day for Biological Diversity on 22 May would highlight the relationship between biodiversity and agriculture. It was also important to stress the need to change behaviours in emerging economies, whose expansion had led to increased demand for fuel.

76. In an effort to address the food crisis before it undermined the country's hard-won peace and stability, his Government had held a meeting of the Council of Ministers devoted exclusively to the rise in food prices and shortages of basic foodstuffs. It had decided on a package of short, medium and long-term measures to meet the peoples' basic needs, in line with the commitments it had made in its negotiations with the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank and the need to balance the State budget. It had taken immediate steps to strengthen the capacity to regulate prices for the coming three to six months, promote the establishment of commodity purchasing centres through implementation of trade facilities and waive import duties for agricultural inputs.

77. The work of the Task Force on the Global Food Security Crisis and the forthcoming Rome Summit were vitally important in addressing the threats to global peace and security represented by the current crisis, and the Council had a major role to play.

78. **Mr. Loayza Barea** (Bolivia) said that the international community as a whole must identify economic policies to promote food security and mitigate the impact of the crisis on the most vulnerable groups. Food security implied that human health was taken into consideration and that food was produced in harmony with nature, rather than the current trend towards genetically-modified crops and biofuel production, which would lead to competition for arable land, water and other resources and a decline in food production.

79. The current crisis could be turned into an opportunity to develop a collective response, harmonize development priorities and achieve sustainable solutions. Bolivia welcomed the initiative by the Secretary-General to establish the Task Force on the Global Food Security Crisis.

80. Bolivia was promoting an agricultural revolution that would redistribute land and provide opportunities for more families to become productive in harmony with nature. Interest-free credit was being made available to small farmers, whose economic interests did not come before social and environmental interests. That agricultural model better met the changing needs of society and was more sustainable.

81. Structural change was needed to address the causes of the food crisis, rather than just its effects. For example, agricultural subsidies in developed countries had the effect of flooding the markets of poor countries, distorting prices, diverting investment from the agricultural sector and leading to dependency. Food became merchandise, with high prices being charged for land, seeds and water, all of which until recently had been public goods. Bolivia intended to reclaim the right to food sovereignty and control of its agriculture.

82. **Mr. Kim** Bong-hyun (Republic of Korea) said that the international community was faced with a situation where hard-won progress towards the Millennium Development Goals could be lost due to skyrocketing food prices. Since the crisis had multiple causes and effects, the response should also be multifaceted and comprehensive. The United Nations, in close cooperation with the Bretton Woods institutions, must take the lead in coordinating global efforts.

83. The challenges presented by the food shortages raised long-term concerns that must be addressed. The World Bank predicted that food prices were likely to remain high through 2015; under those circumstances, multifaceted policies encompassing strategic, long-term approaches along with immediate food assistance were required to ensure sustainable food security.

84. His delegation was dismayed to hear that roughly a third of food shortages were believed to result from bottlenecks in local markets and distribution systems. Immediate steps must be taken to improve market efficiency in order to prevent such shortages. As a country which overcame hunger and poverty within a relatively short period of time, the Republic of Korea was willing to assume its share of responsibility, and was an active participant in humanitarian assistance; it had contributed $1.5 million to WFP in 2008.

85. If handled properly, the current crisis could become an opportunity to deal with the root problems of many of the world's poorest people. It was clear what must be done; all that was needed was political will and leadership to translate commitments into action. The upcoming conference in Rome would be another forum for developing a common strategy.

86. **Mr. Ney Cardoso** (Cape Verde) said that the food crisis could have serious and long-term repercussions for sustainable development and poverty reduction. An increasing number of people were confronted on a daily basis with hard choices between food, health or education. The food crisis, added to the energy crisis and climate change, presented a threat to global peace and security, and the special meeting must make concrete recommendations on those issues. Achievement of the Millennium Development Goals had been put at risk, highlighting the need for a holistic approach to development. In an interconnected world, there could be no progress in climate change mitigation without progress in sustainable development. Fair trade, including the successful completion of the Doha Round, and cancellation of debt for developing and middle-income countries were also essential elements of sustainable development.

87. Cape Verde had graduated from the list of least developed countries in January 2008. Structural vulnerabilities remained, however, and its fragile economy could not absorb the effects of climate change and rising oil and food prices. The Government was concerned about the possibility of stagnation or reversal of its development process. Given that it was highly dependent on imports of fuel and basic commodities, the repercussions of those factors on the economy and the people's lives could be severe. The Government had taken steps to alleviate the impact of rising prices, but it counted on international solidarity from its development partners in meeting those challenges. The price of inaction would be unacceptably high.

88. **Mr. Liu** Zhenmin (China), reviewing some of the complex reasons for the jump in food prices, such as extreme weather conditions, high energy prices, huge export subsidies on agricultural products by developed countries, use of grain for biofuel production, market speculation and devaluation of the United States dollar, said that it was not appropriate, however, to put the blame on improved living standards in some developing countries.

89. The international community bore a shared responsibility for global food security. Its efforts should be focused on increased assistance to the poor through food aid or food subsidies to developing countries, more investment in agriculture through financial and technical assistance, the successful conclusion of the Doha Round leading to the establishment of an equitable multilateral trading system, and giving priority to the role of the United Nations.

90. His Government attached great importance to agriculture. Over the past decade, China had produced the bulk of its food domestically; with less than 9 per cent of the world's arable land, it had been able to feed its 1.3 billion people. His Government was deeply concerned about the impact of rising food prices on developing countries and the financial shortfalls faced by international food assistance programmes. There was still great potential for increased global food output. If the international community strengthened its cooperation and improved the trade environment for agricultural products, developed countries increased their assistance to low-income countries and local government attached importance to agriculture, the situation of global food security would surely change for the better.

Statement by the President of the Economic and Social Council

91. **The President**, summarizing the discussion thus far, said that the special meeting was the first held in response to the 2005 World Summit Outcome. In responding to that complex crisis, all countries must act together urgently. There was a clear role for Governments, the United Nations system, development banks, non-governmental organizations, civil society,

the scientific community, academia, the private sector, philanthropic organizations and the media.

92. Many delegations had stressed the need to pay attention to the medium- and long-term response to the crisis. There was a need to go beyond maintaining past levels of aid delivery in the short term, and to redouble efforts to get food to the hungry. Afflicted countries should immediately put in place targeted food and nutrition support measures and social safety nets with priority for maternal, infant and child programmes. Small farmers must be given the ability to meet the production needs for the next growing season. The research community must bring its knowledge to bear in order to provide a better understanding of food markets.

93. In the medium to long term, donors should re-examine their sectoral allocations of official development assistance to counter the decline in aid to the agricultural sector and in support of infrastructure. A special concerted effort was needed to address the crisis in Africa, home of the largest number of least developed countries. Participants had called for substantially increased donor funding for publicly supported research and development, extension and rural infrastructure to boost agricultural productivity. The Bretton Woods institutions should consider providing financial support to those low-income developing countries that would initially face adjustment costs and worsening food insecurity for the higher global prices associated with agricultural trade liberalization.

94. Governments had been urged to rethink their biofuel policies. The net economic impact and the environmental and social impacts must be balanced and made part of strategic policy. There was also a need for greater regional dialogue and cooperation to enhance regional food security that would facilitate quick responses to local food shortages. He called on private sector partners, in particular the food industry, to consider the need to keep food and agricultural inputs affordable for the world's growing population, and encouraged the global philanthropic community to expand grants to partners in the poorest countries geared towards improving agricultural productivity and increasing food production.

The meeting rose at 6 p.m.

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Special meeting on the global food crisis
Provisional summary record of the 9th meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Thursday, 22 May 2008, at 3 p.m.

President: Mr. Dapkiunas (Vice-President) ..... (Belarus)

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In the absence of Mr. Mérorès (Haiti), Mr. Dapkiunas (Belarus), Vice-President took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3 p.m.

Statements by Member States, agencies, funds and programmes (*continued*)

1. **Mr. Ali** (Malaysia) said that the convening of a special meeting was a clear indication of the importance attaching to the global food crisis; he hoped that the international community's concern would be translated into political will and practical policies.

2. To meet that challenge, it was important to identify the real causes of the crisis, particularly the systemic ones. In his view, there were two main causes: increased subsidies in the North and greater privatization; and the fact that many developing countries had been persuaded to pay less attention to agriculture, leading to a smaller share of national budgets for agriculture and inadequate agriculture-related infrastructure. While it was true that increasing demand from countries with emerging economies had contributed to the food-price increase, such causes were not actionable; people living in such countries could not be asked to consume less food.

3. The complexity of the issue called for conceptual clarity. Since the crisis was inextricably linked to agriculture, discussions about it should be held within the overarching framework of sustainable development, the three pillars of which were economic development, social development and environmental protection. The key principles of sustainable development — particularly shared but differentiated responsibility — must therefore apply. In other words, while developing countries must make every effort to overcome the challenge, the developed world must shoulder the bulk of the burden. Conceptual clarity was also critical if the world was to avoid such pitfalls as addressing the issue piecemeal, linking the crisis with issues only tangentially related to it, using the crisis to advance ideas for which there was no intergovernmental consensus, such as the so-called "responsibility to protect", and using the issue for political and economic ends.

4. The United Nations had a key role to play and must make use of its convening power, unique moral authority, and system-wide resources and expertise. In that connection, he welcomed the recent establishment of the United Nations Task Force on the Global Food Security Crisis. However, the Organization must not focus solely on the humanitarian aspects of the crisis; it must also address the systemic issues in a coherent and coordinated manner, making full use of each agency's expertise, while respecting each agency's mandate. At the same time, the agencies must not use the crisis to raise their profiles and expand their bureaucracies; those affected by the crisis must not become pawns in a bureaucratic game of chess. Malaysia supported efforts to convene a special session of the General Assembly aimed at reaching international consensus on how best to tackle the issue.

5. For its part, Malaysia had taken a number of measures to address the crisis. They included establishing a committee to address increasing food prices; setting aside over $1 billion to finance its food-security policy; importing over 500,000 tons of rice for its stockpile; raising the guaranteed minimum price for rice growers; identifying unused land for food production; and announcing a zero-wastage policy for food and fuel.

6. **Mr. Loizaga** (Paraguay) said that over 40 per cent of his country's population lived in rural areas and earned their living from farming, and over 90 per cent of exports were generated by the rural sector. Indeed, as a net food exporter, Paraguay made a significant contribution to the provision of food for the rest of the world. Its high ratio of food exports per capita did not, however, pose a threat to domestic food security, since higher farm incomes and productive diversity ensured greater food security in both the countryside and the city.

7. With regard to biofuel production, Paraguay was committed to diversifying its energy sources in favour of renewable sources that not only had a low impact on the environment, but also helped boost small producers' incomes. The production of ethanol fuel from sugar cane, currently the country's main source of biofuels, had significantly reduced Paraguay's high dependency on imported oil.

8. Any analysis of the factors affecting food production and pushing up food prices — among them agricultural subsidies in developed countries and the impact of climate change in developing countries — must take account of the unsustainable rise in oil prices and the consequences thereof for the most vulnerable and dependent economies. Landlocked developing

countries such as Paraguay already paid 20 per cent more for imported oil owing to additional transport costs; now transport costs themselves were rising. As a result, Paraguay's producers were facing higher costs and, in some cases, were being forced out of the market.

9. The global food crisis must be the subject of a comprehensive, scientific and sector-wide study that addressed the causes and effects of the crisis both globally and nationally and proposed ways and means of overcoming the crisis, softening the impact of rising oil prices on the most vulnerable, and removing such underlying factors as agricultural subsidies and trade barriers. For energy-dependent countries, it was important that rising oil prices were addressed at the same level as alternative sources of energy.

10. **Mr. Talbot** (Guyana) said that the Council had an important role to play in responding to the global food crisis. The current discussions must be used to forge a coordinated and effective strategy for addressing the crisis, to guide the work of the United Nations Task Force on the Global Food Security Crisis, and to contribute to the outcome of the upcoming High-level Conference on World Food Security.

11. The many factors underlying the crisis included the relative decline in investment in agriculture and rural infrastructure, climate change, the depletion of global food reserves, the diversion of agricultural production from food to biofuels, record oil prices, and the global trading regime. Both the immediate and longer-term effects, however, would be felt most severely by the most vulnerable segments of the world's population.

12. The crisis offered the international community an opportunity to address structural and other causes and take appropriate action. Such action should take account of the challenges already faced by developing countries and complement their own efforts to manage the crisis. Increased resources for emergency relief were a priority in the immediate term. In the medium and long terms, however, greater and sustained investment in agriculture was needed. The international response should therefore include measures to support such investment and suitable arrangements for agriculture in a fair global trading regime. The international financial institutions should provide concessional credit for small producers as a way of increasing agricultural production and sustaining more farmers' livelihoods. Consideration should also be given to establishing a special fund for food security, so as to facilitate access to technology, new and resistant varieties, and training for small-scale farmers.

13. While some biofuel policies had admittedly contributed to the crisis, his Government's prudent approach ensured that biofuels helped solve, rather than aggravate, the development challenges facing developing countries. His Government's policy was that no existing agricultural land would be used to produce crops for biofuels; such production, if and when it took place, would be based on new land.

14. Guyana, although a net exporter of food, was vulnerable to the rising cost of fuel and other inputs needed for food production. His Government was particularly concerned that the crisis could hinder sustainable development and amplify inequalities between and within countries. Measures to soften the short-term impact of the rising cost of basic goods and services on domestic consumers and producers included a gradual reduction in fuel excise tax, zero-rated value-added tax on an extensive list of additional items for vulnerable groups, financial support to contain wheat-price increases, salary increases and a cost-of-living adjustment for public employees, a grow-more-food campaign, diversification of agricultural exports and promotion of rural enterprise and agricultural development.

15. The Heads of Government of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) were urgently seeking solutions. Even though the key to resolving the regional food-security challenge was not fully in the region's hands, action had been taken to ensure adequate food supply and distribution within the region. In the context of the Jagdeo Initiative, which provided the blueprint for collective efforts to revitalize agriculture in the Caribbean, his Government had offered to make land available to CARICOM citizens in an effort to boost agricultural production.

16. There was clearly no lack of awareness of what needed to be done; many measures had been proposed. Guyana endorsed the need for a coordinated and sustained response. It was incumbent upon the Council, in the exercise of its mandate, to generate the means and political will necessary to ensure an adequate response to the crisis.

17. **Mr. Punkrasin** (Observer for Thailand) said that the global food crisis had highlighted problems on

many fronts. While some parts of the world were characterized by advanced agricultural technologies and overindulgence, in others parts of the world farmers lacked the technology needed to boost production and millions of people faced hunger every day. Despite the international community's pledges, official development assistance (ODA) was on the decline. The international community had not done enough, particularly for Africa. It could not guarantee basic requirements such as food and water, let alone achieve the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals.

18. The food crisis had not occurred in isolation, but was inextricably linked to climate change, water problems and soaring oil prices, among other things. Developing-country farmers were planting less and producing less owing to escalating fertilizer and energy costs. An in-depth study was needed to determine whether the oil-price increase was purely market driven or partly due to speculation, and how much the rocketing price of oil added to the price of food. Food security and energy security must go hand in hand. Many countries, including the world's largest economy, were facing rising living costs owing to oil dependence.

19. Despite the fact that Thailand was the world's fifth food producer and top rice-exporting country and that the world price of rice was on the rise, Thai farmers were still poor. His Government had adopted His Majesty the King's philosophy of a "sufficiency economy" and new theory in managing land and water resources for agriculture. Sustainable development began with sustainable production and consumption.

20. His Government welcomed the measures put forward by the Secretary-General, in particular the establishment of the United Nations Task Force on the Global Food Security Crisis. He hoped that the Task Force would incorporate the views expressed into the proposed plan of action to be discussed at the upcoming High-level Conference on World Food Security.

21. **Mr. Ehouzou** (Benin) said that the World Food Programme (WFP) and the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), among others, had been ringing alarm bells about the global food situation for a long time; it was a shame that those warnings had not been heeded earlier.

22. The causes of the crisis were complex and varied, and ranged from diminished supply to speculation. They included greater demand in general — and specifically for biofuels — ever-higher energy and transport costs, and the inequity of the international system, as seen in the farm subsidies, tariff regimes and technical barriers that placed developing-country farmers at a disadvantage. In addition, developing countries had liberalized their agricultural policies and eliminated rural support structures, leaving small farmers defenceless against international market forces. Farmers urgently needed assistance in the form of seeds for the next harvest.

23. His Government was confident that the international community would undertake in-depth reforms aimed at complementing the national efforts of countries affected by the crisis and ensuring global food self-sufficiency. To that end, investment in agricultural production should be increased, in particular in such areas as infrastructure, water management, better access to inputs for small farmers, effective marketing systems and appropriate storage facilities. The search for regional solutions, including South-South cooperation and triangular cooperation, should be stepped up and the share of agricultural assistance in ODA increased. Benin welcomed the pledges made in that connection, but hoped that additional pledges would be made at the High-level Conference on World Food Security to be held in June. The United Nations Task Force, meanwhile, should focus on concrete actions. One idea it could examine was that of establishing, within the United Nations system, a global reserve of basic necessities.

24. His Government hoped that discussions on the current crisis would not become a matter of routine; there was no point having meeting after meeting. The international community needed to act fast to solve the crisis and use the current opportunity to reflect on long-term action.

25. **Ms. Rodríguez de Ortiz** (Observer for the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) said that it was not the price of fuel that had caused the food shortages in many developing countries but rather the economic models imposed by the developed countries to serve their interests. In 1995, although the average price of oil had fallen to $15 a barrel, the global price of grain had risen by 50 per cent. International financial institutions clearly had failed to take into account that agricultural production would be affected by a decrease

in arable land and water and an increase in erosion and land degradation.

26. To solve the food crisis, its root cause must be addressed: too often, development financing was accompanied by conditionalities that restricted the right of each State to pursue policies that defended the rights and welfare of its people.

27. For its part, the Venezuelan Government was restructuring the agricultural and rural sectors to ensure food security. In the context of South-South cooperation, a treaty on sovereignty and food security had recently been signed by the members of the Bolivarian Alternative for the Americas (ALBA). It provided for food complementarity based on each country's food requirements. In addition, at a regional summit on sovereignty and food security held recently in Managua, Venezuela had put forward a set of proposals to finance agricultural production. It urged the newly established Task Force on the Global Food Security Crisis to take the summit declaration into consideration. It also encouraged the Task Force to take steps to protect biodiversity and balance food and biofuel production in its quest for sustainable food security.

28. **Mr. El Moujahid** (Observer for Morocco) said that vulnerable populations expected concrete measures based on a thorough assessment of the causes of the food crisis, namely the subsidy policies adopted by large agricultural producers; the policies of international financial institutions, which did not promote food sovereignty; the reduction throughout the 1990s of official development assistance for agriculture; climate change; and the increased demand for foodstuffs by large States with emerging economies.

29. Recommended solutions included increasing resources to promote long-term food self-sufficiency, establishing information systems for food security, strengthening regional cooperation and reorganizing regional markets.

30. Morocco advocated the establishment of a multilateral fund to encourage regional capacity-building and technology transfers and to assist developing countries in adapting to climate change. It also encouraged more effective North-South cooperation especially to tackle climate change.

31. **Mr. Belle** (Observer for Belgium), speaking on behalf of the Commission on the Status of Women, said that the food crisis had a disproportionate effect on women and girls, as they comprised the majority of the poor. Recalling that women played a critical role in food-crop production and the preservation of land and water resources, he stressed the need to involve them in the search for solutions by ensuring their general empowerment.

32. **Mr. Khoc** (Sudan) said that the response to the food crisis must cover short-, medium- and long-term goals. He welcomed the establishment of the United Nations Task Force on the Global Food Security Crisis but stressed that it must share the outcome of its work with Member States and allow for a transparent debate.

33. The Sudan called on the international community, particularly the developed countries, to respond to the emergency appeals for funding from the World Food Programme (WFP) and the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO). For its part, the Sudan was strengthening its social-services network and subsidizing small farmers. It was also promoting an ambitious agricultural-development programme to diversify the economy and counter an excessive reliance on oil.

34. The crisis had exposed the inequality and weakness of the current international system. At the upcoming conference in Doha, participants must make every effort to tackle the challenges facing developing countries and encourage countries to meet their commitments in respect of external debt, official development assistance and technology transfer.

35. **Mr. Frommelt** (Liechtenstein) said that, if the international community did not respond immediately to the food crisis, the implementation of several Millennium Development Goals would be at risk. Many of the factors contributing to the crisis, such as climate change, the rising world population, changing dietary habits and soaring oil prices, were likely to have a lasting effect. It was essential to reinvest in the agricultural sectors of developing countries and bring the Doha Development Agenda to a successful conclusion. States must avoid imposing measures that might exacerbate the rise in food prices, and food supplies needed for humanitarian purposes must be allowed to circulate freely. It was also important to strengthen the capacity of WFP to respond to humanitarian needs by providing non-earmarked

contributions. Liechtenstein had contributed 200,000 Swiss francs to the latest WFP appeal and was ready to consider further support.

36. Liechtenstein welcomed the establishment of the United Nations Task Force and the upcoming High-level Conference on World Food Security in Rome. The conference would help ensure a coherent, inclusive international response to the emergency.

37. **Mr. Fluss** (Observer for Israel) said that, in the short term, it was necessary to ensure that food and sustenance reached the most vulnerable countries. The long-term solution, however, was to provide the means and capacity to produce food locally. That required a multilevel strategic plan and an increased focus on the agricultural sector, the latter having been largely neglected by the international community since the 1970s. The plan should address water-conservation, climate change, drought and trade.

38. Israel was committed to the promotion of agriculture and technological progress and had introduced a draft resolution on agricultural technology for development in the General Assembly, which called on Member States to make agricultural technology and know-how available to developing countries and to increase international research and development. Israel was prepared to work with countries requiring agricultural and water technologies, especially at the smallholder level.

39. **Mr. Lawal** (Observer for Nigeria) said that the importance of coordinated international leadership could not be overstated; he hoped that the newly established Task Force would play an important role in that regard. Although the food crisis was global, African countries were among the worst affected. It was time to focus on agriculture, especially in Africa, which had vast resources but faced daunting challenges.

40. Nigeria welcomed the international community's interest in promoting a green revolution in Africa and encouraged States to mainstream their efforts into the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme, which had been prepared by the New Partnership for Africa's Development.

41. In an effort to revitalize agriculture, Nigeria had set aside $1.7 billion to boost domestic production of food crops during 2008-2011. As a major producer of gas — a main component of fertilizer — it would also welcome increased foreign investment in that area.

42. **Mr. Hagen** (United States of America) said that President Bush had recently announced his intention to spend an additional $1 billion on emergency food aid and agricultural development. The Government intended to mobilize food aid for Africa through WFP and other international programmes and to provide disaster assistance to mitigate the impact of rising food prices on vulnerable populations. Programmes would include emergency nutritional rehabilitation and the provision of cash vouchers to help people purchase food and farm inputs to increase local production. In the longer term, programmes would focus on improving agricultural productivity through dissemination of improved seed and fertilizer, better land-management practices and the alleviation of bottlenecks.

43. The international community must strive to complete the Doha Round in 2008 and remove export restrictions, which prevented food from reaching the most vulnerable and ultimately lowered production by reducing incentives to increase output. It was also important to remove barriers to biotechnology, which could dramatically improve agricultural productivity.

44. The United States was paying close attention to the potential impact of biofuels on food prices and was making substantial investments in second-generation biofuel technologies. It was also working closely with the United Nations and developing-country partners to enhance resilience to the many factors affecting food security, including through the Famine Early Warning System Network. The United States expected the Secretary-General's Task Force to produce a coordinated but flexible response to the food crisis through all relevant United Nations development and humanitarian agencies and would participate actively in the upcoming high-level conference in Rome.

45. **Mr. Kononuchenko** (Russian Federation) said that it was tragic that in the twenty-first century, despite unprecedented development and technological breakthroughs, the United Nations was forced to address a global food crisis and the threat of hunger. An objective assessment of the crisis was needed.

46. His Government believed that the crisis had resulted from an unfortunate confluence of longstanding and newly emerging factors. Among them were increased consumption in developing countries

and decreased production in the countries that were major agricultural producers. The global economy had not been able to adapt to that situation with the flexibility it had shown in the past. Other new factors were the accelerated change of focus in the agricultural sector from food to biofuel production and flows of speculative capital being shifted from financial markets to commodity markets in a sudden and unpredictable way that had ultimately been destructive. An immediate humanitarian response was needed, but it was also necessary to establish the long-term conditions for global food security, and his delegation hoped that the special meeting could start that process.

47. **Mr. Exantus** (Haiti) said that skyrocketing food prices in many countries, including Haiti, had led to street demonstrations which in some cases had turned violent. Through the 1970s, Haiti had been almost self-sufficient in basic commodities, but in the early 1980s it had opened its markets, with the immediate effect of flooding the market with imported corn and rice at greatly reduced prices, eroding its already limited production capacity. Twenty years later, vulnerable groups, which at first had embraced the illusion that they would be able to feed themselves at minimal cost forever, were the main victims of the steep price increases. As a result of those misguided liberalization policies, rural people had flocked to the cities in search of a better life, and currently found themselves spending up to 80 per cent of their incomes for food.

48. Medium and long-term agricultural policies should focus on food security rather than potential for commercial profit. Developing countries, especially the least developed countries, should be given technical and financial assistance to enable them to produce sufficient quantities of food to feed their population without being subjected to global market forces, which did not always operate according to just principles. Markets should be subject to regulation to prevent monopolies and speculation, and agricultural subsidies reduced.

49. The food crisis threatened to erase the progress made thus far towards achievement of the Millennium Development Goal of halving extreme poverty. Although the special meeting was unlikely to put food directly onto the plates of hungry families, it would help to guide the Council in its deliberations on ways and means for an immediate response to the crisis and provide input for the forthcoming Rome summit.

50. **Mr. Al-Najem** (Observer for Kuwait) emphasized the important role of international trade in food security and called for immediate and long-term actions to improve agricultural techniques in developing countries, thereby increasing their competitiveness. States needed to take a fresh look at grain-based biofuels and implement measures to prevent speculation in food commodities.

51. His Highness the Emir of Kuwait had launched a "dignified life fund" to help developing countries combat the current crisis. The Government had made a $100-million contribution to the fund and would continue to work for the well-being of the world's peoples.

52. **Mr. Nendongo Aluteni** (Observer for Namibia) said that the food crisis threatened to reverse the gains made towards the achievement of the Goal on eradication of poverty and hunger, and if not addressed properly, could develop into a threat to international peace and stability.

53. Namibia, an arid country, imported close to half its domestic food requirements. It was therefore alarmed that a number of food-producing countries had already put in place mechanisms to restrict food exports, while some of their citizens were hoarding food in order to influence the market artificially and sell at inflated prices. While the Council should call on Governments to increase their investment in agriculture and expand production, it should also discourage the practice of hoarding food while people starved.

54. Although an emergency response to the crisis was welcome, long-term solutions were also needed. The Government had taken a number of measures to increase agricultural production, including the development of irrigation and initiatives to increase local production, marketing and processing of fruit, vegetables and livestock fodder under its Green Scheme Programme. Agricultural inputs such as fertilizers and quality seeds were subsidized for small farmers, and agricultural-extension services had been decentralized to make them more accessible. However, lack of market access for agricultural products was discouraging to producers in developing countries. He called on the developed countries to remove their trade-distorting agricultural subsidies and conclude the Doha Round of trade negotiations with development at its centre.

55. The recently concluded sixteenth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development had also focused on the food crisis and whether production of biofuels led to food insecurity. The Council should pursue its deliberations on that topic so as to provide further guidance.

56. **Mr. Alahraf** (Observer for the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) said that the food crisis was a major cause for concern for the future political and economic situation of vulnerable communities. Humanitarian assistance and a rapid response were needed, along with radical changes to the international policies of the past two decades. Agriculture was the tool to combat poverty and hunger and achieve sustainable development. The rich countries should end agricultural subsidies and open their markets to the products of developing countries. It was important to promote regular investment in agriculture, and the international financial institutions could play a leading role in developing mechanisms to deal with the crisis. Direct investment in agriculture and promoting the role of small farmers was necessary. He commended the actions by the Secretary-General to deal with the food crisis through the establishment of the Task Force, which must not become politicized.

57. **Mr. Valenzuela** (European Community) said that higher food prices were likely to persist in the medium term, as the underlying increase in demand and the relative inelasticity of supply would prevent them from falling back to pre-crisis levels. Accordingly, a number of adjustments in the market management of the European Union Common Agricultural Policy had been made to mitigate the short-term effects of price increases. While the short-term effects of the situation on the global poor were negative, rising prices in the medium to long term presented potential new income-generating opportunities for farmers and could enhance the contribution of agriculture to economic growth. Renewed support to the agricultural sector of developing countries, neglected in recent decades, represented a clear priority for the international community.

58. Considering that three out of four poor people in developing countries lived in rural areas and most depended on agriculture for their livelihoods, rising commodity and food prices could benefit the majority of the poor, provided that the right development, trade and market tools were available. Given that no country was self-sufficient in food production, the right trade policies could make an important contribution to improving the operation of global agricultural markets. The European Union would continue to promote an open trade policy and encourage the elimination of export restrictions. High food prices should also reinforce the commitment of developed countries to reform their trade-distorting farm subsidies through an early conclusion of the Doha Round. Much could also be gained by the integration of regional food and agricultural markets. Insofar as rising prices were attributable to underlying structural causes such as expanding demand from emerging economies or high energy prices, however, agricultural trade policy measures were unlikely to represent an appropriate response.

59. The European Union's global response strategy contained a mix of measures ranging from humanitarian operations and fiscal measures to investment in agriculture and rural development. The coordination of all stakeholders would be a key element of a successful international response to soaring food prices. In order to maximize the impact of the international response, the principles of the 2005 Paris Declaration should be respected by the main donors.

60. **Mr. Ockenden** (Commonwealth Secretariat) said that it was important to emphasize that the food crisis was an issue of human rights as much as it was a question of economics. The right to food was a fundamental human right, and all States had an obligation to cooperate to achieve freedom from hunger and malnutrition. Many Commonwealth members, especially the small island developing States, faced a twin challenge from rising food and energy prices.

61. The policy prescription to meet the short-term challenge should include financial support through the international financial institutions, the obligation for States to cooperate to secure the right to food, avoiding policies which harmed others, for example, subsidies in the developed world, biofuel production and export restrictions, and an obligation at the domestic level to ensure that social-safety nets were well-designed and targeted the poorest.

62. To promote a positive response in regard to the food supply, it would be necessary to conclude the Doha Development Round, promote secure land tenure, invest in infrastructure (both the soft infrastructure of

knowledge and market information and the hard infrastructure of warehouses, roads and ports), give greater priority to agriculture at the national and international levels, including investment in extension services, and boost confidence in markets. History showed that agricultural booms were more short-lived and less frequent than busts, and without assets to smooth the adjustment, many poor farmers did not wish to take risks and had no incentive to increase production, an area where international innovation would be needed.

63. **Mr. Maradona** (Intergovernmental Institution for the use of Micro-algae Spirulina Against Malnutrition) said that the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs attributed the global food crisis to lack of planning and of investment in agriculture over an extended period of time and diversion of natural resources for biofuel production. Higher food prices had radically different effects across countries and population groups, with net food-importing countries struggling to meet domestic demand.

64. At the household level, higher food prices led the poor to limit consumption and further undermined nutritional balance. The Secretary-General had called for fresh ideas and strategies to counter malnutrition, and his organization envisioned that development agencies and the international community would join its endeavour to use the micro-algae Spirulina as an intervention and enrichment tool so that its nutritional benefits could be delivered to the neediest. Malnutrition was a major impediment to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, and using Spirulina as a food supplement, because of its high nutritional content, accessibility and affordability, had significant potential in helping to realize a world free of hunger and malnutrition.

65. **Ms. Ritola** (International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies) said there was an immediate need for an effective global response that addressed the short- and long-term aspects of food security. Policies promoting biofuels needed to be revisited, trade agreements must be reviewed and better food banks established. Such macro-level interventions had to be integrated with actions at the micro-level.

66. In addition to ongoing emergency interventions, in the previous month the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies had launched a new five-year food-security plan for Africa. With an initial budget of $40 million, 80 per cent of which would be spent on direct, integrated country-level programming, the initiative would benefit over 2 million people. It would also enable 15 Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies in Africa to develop the capacity, skills and resources they needed to have a lasting impact on food security by reaching at least 20 per cent of the most vulnerable individuals in their communities.

67. It was encouraging that food security was now high on the international agenda; it was time for Governments, as well as the United Nations, NGOs and the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, to develop a comprehensive and sustainable solution to the global food crisis.

68. **Mr. Masuku** (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)) said that FAO had recently launched an initiative on soaring food prices to provide technical and policy assistance to the most affected countries, with a view to increasing local production and preventing future crises. FAO had already allocated $17 million of its own resources to the initiative, but meeting the objectives contained in the initiative would require an additional $1.7 billion.

69. FAO had also joined forces with Governments, regional development banks, private foundations and United Nations agencies to include measures to counter soaring food prices in new projects and, in some cases, to reallocate existing funds to address immediate issues. Furthermore, joint assessment missions by FAO, WFP, the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), and the World Bank had been sent to several countries to assess the impact of high food prices and to prepare immediate-response plans. Recognizing that many countries lacked the capacity to prepare national interventions, FAO and other agencies were collaborating with the African Union and the New Partnership for Africa's Development to assist such countries. In that connection, a workshop was currently being held in South Africa to analyse the general situation of groups vulnerable to food security and to provide a regional platform for immediate policy actions to mitigate the impact of the crisis.

70. The High-level Conference on World Food Security to be held in Rome in June had originally been planned for discussion of world food security and the challenges of climate change and bioenergy. However, as food prices had begun an unprecedented

rise, it had become increasingly important for the Conference to debate the food crisis. The recently established United Nations Task Force on the Global Food Security Crisis might be considered an appropriate instrument to follow up the outcome of the conference.

71. **Ms. Béavogui** (International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD)) said that special attention should be devoted to smallholders, as they represented huge potential for increasing food production and were therefore central to any solution to the current global food crisis and the long-term problems of hunger and poverty. There was an urgent need for measures to boost agricultural production, within a medium-term framework that would enable farmers to increase their productivity and income on a sustainable basis. A three-pronged approach was needed: increased emergency food aid; short-term support for agricultural producers, including the supply of seeds and fertilizer; and increased investment in agriculture and rural development to enhance productivity, promote food security and eliminate the root causes of hunger. IFAD was committed to working with all partners to ensure that agricultural and rural development and food security returned to the development agenda.

72. **Ms. Guidry** (World Bank) said that the next few weeks were critical in addressing the food crisis. Rapid action by the international community was required to deflate the price spiral in world food markets, facilitate an orderly resolution of the crisis and mitigate its impacts. Continued unchecked rises could undermine gains made over the last decade in reducing poverty and malnutrition, while inadequate policy responses could jeopardize years of progress made on sound macroeconomic management and agricultural diversification. The crisis offered a window of opportunity to put in place key medium-term reforms that addressed the underlying causes of the crisis and prevented such crises from reoccurring.

73. Immediate actions were needed to fill the remaining financing gap in the WFP budget and to increase the flexibility of use of those funds; to support the expansion of safety nets and social-protection instruments in poor and capacity-constrained countries; and to stimulate an immediate supply response and ensure that small-scale farmers in low-income countries particularly affected by the crisis were able to plant for the next harvest. Essential medium-term actions to address the underlying causes of the crisis included the re-examining by advanced countries of their policies on biofuels with a view to defusing tensions between energy-security and food-security objectives; improving agricultural productivity in low-income countries so as to lay the foundations of a long-term solution; and building a better functioning international trading system that avoided the recurrence of such crises.

74. The World Bank was working closely with other United Nations agencies and development partners on a common strategy to deal with the food crisis. Its current initiatives included policy advice and support, expedited financial support, and analysis and research to address critical knowledge gaps.

75. **Ms. Brown** (International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)) said that the underlying causes of food insecurity needed to be addressed through increased investment in agricultural research and technology transfer to ensure the sustainable intensification of agricultural productivity. For many years, IAEA had been working to develop isotopic and nuclear techniques to help member States improve food security and achieve sustainable agricultural production in such areas as soil science and pest control. Nuclear techniques in particular were of great socio-economic importance and, combined with modern biotechnologies, provided more efficient ways of improving food availability, accessibility and affordability.

76. **Mr. Hyder** (World Food Programme (WFP)) said that the immediate priority in the current crisis was to feed the hungry. In that connection, WFP managed a global lifeline that, in 2008, aimed to meet the needs of 74 million hungry people in the world. WFP was grateful for the strong response of many Governments to its appeal for an additional $755 million just to meet increased costs caused by higher food and energy prices; however, some 100 million additional people facing poverty and hunger as a result of rising food prices.

77. In the longer term, WFP was prepared to work with Governments as they reformed existing policies to mitigate the current and potential future impact of high food prices. Such cooperation included establishing new food and social-protection systems, establishing food-security and vulnerability monitoring systems,

and providing advice on ways to strengthen national food-distribution programmes and safety nets.

78. The upcoming High-level Conference on World Food Security would review the full range of response measures needed from the international community; partnership and collective action were essential in that endeavour. If crisis-response actions proved successful, stability would return and a stronger foundation would be laid for medium-term measures aimed at boosting agricultural production. In that regard, FAO would play a critical role in helping Governments to ensure that farmers had more secure access to seeds and fertilizer and that significant investment was made in agriculture and rural infrastructure. WFP would support FAO and Governments in that task, building on years of experience in community works and relying on its extensive implementation capacity in the field.

79. **Mr. Glough** (United Nations Environment Programme) said that, parallel to immediate humanitarian needs, the root cause of the current food crisis, namely unsustainability, needed to be addressed. Because agriculture remained the main cause of genetic erosion, species loss and conversion of natural habitats, solutions to the food crisis should also address the ongoing degradation of ecosystems and loss of biodiversity. In addition to supporting food security and acting as carbon filters for pollutants, functioning ecosystems were crucial buffers against extreme climate events.

80. It was neither strategic nor sustainable to focus on one cause or one solution. Just as society invested in social and economic infrastructure, the international community must also invest in nature, including land restoration, integrated water-resources management, and improved soil productivity. Investment in science and technology was also essential, as was disseminating up-to-date information to stakeholders and strengthening ecological literacy to enable people to make decisions that supported sustainable development.

Conclusion of the special meeting

81. **The President** drew attention to the President's concluding remarks, to be distributed in document E/2008/66.

The meeting rose at 5.30 p.m.

United Nations E/2008/SR.10

Economic and Social Council

Provisional

24 July 2008

Original: English

Resumed organizational session for 2008

Provisional summary record of the 10th meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Thursday, 12 June 2008, at 12 p.m.

President: Mr. Mérorès ..... (Haiti)

Contents

Election of a Vice-President

Corrections to this record should be submitted in one of the working languages. They should be set forth in a memorandum and also incorporated in a copy of the record. They should be sent *within one week of the date of this document* to the Chief, Official Records Editing Section, room DC2-750, 2 United Nations Plaza.

08-37772 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 12.05 p.m.

Election of a Vice-President

1. **The President** announced the departure from the Council of Ambassador Kim Hyun-chong, who had returned to his country. In accordance with rule 22 of the rules of procedure of the Council, the Group of Asian States had endorsed the candidacy of Mr. Park In-kook, the new Permanent Representative of the Republic of Korea to the United Nations, to replace Ambassador Kim Hyun-chong.

2. *Mr. Park In-kook (Republic of Korea) was elected by acclamation Vice-President of the Council for the remainder of its 2008 session.*

The meeting rose at 12.15 p.m.